



# KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## NEWS RELEASE

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## **KDE PAYS 2016-17 AP TEST FEES FOR QUALIFYING STUDENTS**

(Frankfort, KY) – In an effort to increase students' opportunity to take Advanced Placement exams, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) will underwrite the cost of the tests in the 2016-17 school year for students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch.

"The Kentucky Department of Education is committed to closing the opportunity gap for students, and as such, believes all students should have equal access to the benefits of AP coursework," Commissioner of Education Stephen Pruitt said. "Nothing, including the testing fee, should stand in the way. All of our students should have the opportunity to enroll in AP classes and take the corresponding AP test for college credit."

In 2016, more than 4,000 colleges and universities around the world received qualifying AP test scores for college credit, advanced placement, and/or consideration in the admission process, with many colleges and universities in the United States offering credit in one or more subjects for qualifying AP scores.

While KRS 160.348(3) requires costs of the AP exams to be paid by the KDE, state funding has not been available. In the past, the KDE worked to secure federal grants to pay the fees for private and public school students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL). Unfortunately, the recently enacted Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) removes the grant provision (AP Test Fee Program) providing dedicated federal Title I funds for this purpose.

It is estimated that it will cost the department up to \$800,000 to underwrite the tests for qualifying students. Pruitt said because student opportunity and access is such a high priority for the department, he has reallocated the money from other areas. Without the department covering the fee, it would be up to districts to pay the \$53 test fee for students in poverty.

While students from all backgrounds can benefit from taking challenging coursework in high school, data from 2016 shows that nationwide among African American, Hispanic and Native American students with the potential to succeed in AP courses, only about half enroll in this rigorous coursework.

“We must encourage all students to participate in Advanced Placement coursework, not just those who typically have done so in the past,” Pruitt said. “Research shows that when presented with rigorous coursework and provided with the necessary supports, students rise to the occasion.”

In recent years, Kentucky has worked to expand AP access to underrepresented student groups, and participation and success in academically rigorous coursework such as AP classes through the [AdvanceKentucky](#) initiative. A total of 109 Kentucky public high schools have participated since its inception in 2008.

Among the elements of success that AdvanceKentucky promotes as part of its program are:

- **Open Enrollment:** A culture of inclusiveness and preparation for more students to enroll and be successful in Advanced Placement math, science and English (MSE) classes.
- **AP Courses in MSE:** Advanced Placement college-level courses in Math, Science and English subjects.
- **Student Time-on-Task:** Tutoring, 15 to 18 hours of student study sessions for each AP course, and other supports made readily available to students.
- **Exam Fees:** Supplements to help cover 50 percent of AP exam fees not provided from other sources.
- **Incentives:** \$100 per qualifying score (3, 4, or 5) on AP exams in MSE.
- **Counseling/Recruiting:** Supportive information and briefings (especially in the early grades) to help with student/family decisions to prepare for and enroll in AP.
- **Teacher Training:** Rigorous content-focused five-day summer institute (or pre-approved equivalent) for all AP teachers for the first two years, two-day AdvanceKentucky Fall Forum training during the academic year and four-day summer Laying the Foundation institute for five pre-AP teachers each for three years (others welcome to attend with registration fee).
- **AP Teacher Mentors:** Master AP teacher mentor colleagues on relevant subject matter on a path to new learning among AP students. (A stipend is paid to the mentor per mentee served; the contract is between the Mentor and the Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation to serve AdvanceKentucky teachers.)

The AP participation and performance of various student groups in Kentucky’s public high schools has increased significantly under AdvanceKentucky’s mission to engage more students traditionally underrepresented in AP, including minority and low-income students.

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